GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:545
ANSWERED ON:12.04.2017
Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has been set up under the Department of Biotechnology in the country;
(b) if so, the details thereof along with its aims and objectives;
(c) the details of the products/technologies and intellectual property rights which have been generated by BIRAC so far;
(d) the details of BIRAC schemes that are supported and funded by the Government; and
(e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to develop India into a global innovation hub?

Answer

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF LOK SABHA STARED QUESTION NO. *545 TO BE ANSWERED ON 12/04/2017 REGARDING "BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY RESEARCH ASSISTANCE COUNCIL"

(a) Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) was set up as a Section 8 (not for profit) Public Sector Undertakingin 2012 under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India.

(b) BIRAC's Vision is "to stimulate, foster and enhance the strategic research and innovation capabilities of the Indian Biotech Industry, particularly startups and SMEs for creation of affordable products addressing the needs of the largest section of the society".

(c) Over the last 5 years, through BIRAC support 66 products and technologies have been generated. These products belong to important domain areas of biotechnology such as medical technologies (devices & diagnosis for detection of infectious and chronic diseases), healthcare including vaccines and therapeutics, improved crop varieties, industrial processes and renewable energies. Through BIRAC support, 120 intellectual properties have been generated encompassing all important areas of biotechnology.

(d) BIRAC has initiated several funding schemes to bridge the existing gaps in the industry-academia Innovation research and facilitate novel, high quality affordable products development through cutting edge technologies. These extend from ideation to proof of concept (POC), early and late stage validation to scale-up.
The BIRAC funding schemes are as follows:
â€¢ BIG (Biotechnology Ignition Grant): Flagship start-up funding programme of BIRAC which provides Seed grant of up to INR 50 lakhs for research projects with commercialization potential with duration of up to 18 months to individuals, researchers from academia and startups.
â€¢ SPARSH (Social Innovation Programme for Products Affordable & Relevant to Societal Health): Aims to develop innovations that would create direct impact in the society in the near to medium term future. Grant-in-aid assistance up to INR 50 lakhs for a period up to 18 months is provided in this scheme.
â€¢ Small Business Innovation Research Initiative (SBIRI): Early stage, innovation focused PPP initiative in the area of Biotechnology, aims at funding high risk innovative R&D beyond proof-of-concept. Support in form of grant-in-aid for projects up to INR 100 lakhs in PPP mode is provided under this scheme.
â€¢ Biotechnology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP): Support for high risk, accelerated technology development especially in futuristic technologies having major economic potential and focused on IP creation. Under this scheme Financial support of up to 50% of the approved project is provided.
â€¢ Contract Research Scheme (CRS): Supports validation of academic research having commercialisation potential, by the industry.
(e) The National Biotechnology Development Strategy (2015-20) announced by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in December, 2015 had laid down a clear action plan to build the Indian biotech ecosystem of the country to US $100 billion by 2025. This is through creation of required infrastructure and human resources, nurturing the innovation ecosystem, launching focussed Mission Programmes in Health, Agriculture and Energy and forging International Partnership. There is also a major emphasis on enhancing manufacturing capabilities.

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